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Garrison Says Evidence Rules Cost Him Verdict

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NEW ORLEANS, March 14 (UPI)—Jim Garrison, the District Attorney who contended he had "solved" the assassination of President Kennedy, says he lost the Clay L. Shaw case because he was forced to present a modern "James Bond novel" type of conspiracy in a trial bound by old rules.

Mr. Garrison, sitting relaxed with pipe in hand, made his first public appearance since the Shaw trial last night in an exclusive interview here with television station WVUE. Mr. Garrison said he had left the courtroom before the jury reached its verdict of not guilty because he had not intended to make any public statement no matter what the jury decided.

The jury deliberated less than an hour before finding Mr. Shaw, a retired New Orleans businessman, not guilty of charges that he had conspired to murder Mr. Kennedy.

Mr. Garrison said the prosecution lost the case for two reasons:

1. "A bad tactical decision which I made."
2. "The tremendous difficulty of presenting a domestic espionage operation in an Anglo-Saxon courtroom."

Associated Press

Jim Garrison

The District Attorney said his "tactical" error had consisted of not putting any witnesses on the stand who had been in trouble before. He indicated that the witnesses not called for the Shaw conspiracy trial would be called in Mr. Shaw's perjury trial.

Mr. Garrison has charged that Mr. Shaw lied under oath when he denied knowing either David W. Ferrie or Lee Harvey Oswald, two alleged conspirators in a New Orleans plot to kill Mr. Kennedy. At least 10 witnesses testified at the trial that they had seen Mr. Shaw with either Oswald or Mr. Ferrie in 1963.

Mr. Garrison conceded, however, that had he been siting on the Shaw jury "I would have had a great deal to debate about" Mr. Shaw's guilt or innocence.

In criticizing the trial system, Mr. Garrison said that the rules of evidence in American courts restricted what evidence he could present. He did not elaborate on this point, and he was not available today.

Mr. Garrison repeated his latest theory on the motive in Mr. Kennedy's death. He said the President had been shot to death "because the cold war was being brought to an end."

The cold war was worth some $79-billion a year, and some forces, primarily the Central Intelligence Agency, wanted Mr. Kennedy killed to preserve it, Mr. Garrison theorized.

He has also espoused theories that anti-Castro Cubans, the paramilitary right and the military-industrial establishment had engineered Mr. Kennedy's death.

"Were I the jury I would have been concerned about the lack of motive," Mr. Garrison said. He referred to the assassination as "a coup d' état that originated in Washington."

Mr. Garrison said there were "certain indications" the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had been perpetrated by the same "mode of operation" but said he would not begin an investigation into Dr. King's death unless the crime originated in Orleans Parish.

Mr. Garrison, saying he was "not crazy about public life" and was "looking forward to retiring to private life," said a front-page editorial in The New Orleans States-Item asking him to resign had made him reconsider.

"I find myself thinking of running again," Mr. Garrison said. "I did not fight The Federal Government two and a half years to resign because the newspaper says I should."

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